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DD/S 72.1242

31 MAR 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT   : Archives, History, and Records

REFERENCE   : Memorandum dtd 6 March 1972 to DDI, DDP,
                 DDS&T, DDS from Executive Director-
                 Comptroller, Same Subject

1. As you requested at the 8 March Deputies meeting, I am commenting on the referent memorandum. I have read [   ] 25X1A memorandum to you and in general I agree with his observations. I am adding my thoughts on some specifics.
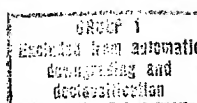
2. The interrelationships between the three subjects are fairly evident and I agree that the purpose of history, archives, and records is to "record our experience to make it available for future use as required". I think that it is well to bear in mind also the basic differences as we are dealing with this matter, and that the documents encompassed take on different meanings as they are employed for the different uses. As I see it, records are the materials -- in our offices and at the Records Center -- which we use in conducting our daily business. Archives are those items with enduring or permanent legal or historical value which are screened from records and preserved. The histories are written using both records and archives as source material, with primary emphasis being placed upon searching archives.

3. Certainly if the Records Management Board is going to function with an appreciable degree of effectiveness, its membership should be upgraded. If persons such as [   ] 25X1A
[   ] are appointed to the Board, not 25X1A only will implementation of the records program be stimulated but I am sure that the Board's reports to you will take on a character which the present Board is unable to generate. I endorse the addition to the Board of the CIA Archivist and the CIA Historian.

4. There is considerable merit to the thought of including a member of the Records Management Board as a non-voting member of the Information Processing Board with functions as you have described.

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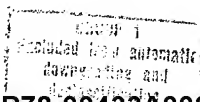downgrading and
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5. I also agree that the reconstituted Board should take another hard look at what records we are sending to the Records Center for storage, and try to identify categories which can be sent to a GSA/National Archives records center. As you know, we had no success in prior years in identifying categories which might be transferred to a GSA repository. The major problem was that none of the components responsible for the records could agree to their records being held in another agency's custody, subject to that agency's servicing and security.

6. The annual reports idea has promise; chronicles such as these, if prepared properly, will provide historians with invaluable keys to other documents containing greater details regarding Agency activities and events. Nonetheless, I should not think that the annual reports could be viewed as substitutes for histories, nor that the annual reports could obviate the need for historical research in depth, research extending well beyond the annual coverage. If we were to join these annual reports to the program call cycle, we will have to make sure that they are not oriented to the defense of programs being proposed, rather than providing broader, more objective, views of the components' significant events and accomplishments during the past year. Assuming we achieve that objective, as you point out the annual reports can indeed facilitate the preparation of future histories which are activity-related on an Agency-wide basis, rather than employing the traditional "office history" approach.

7. I have given the archives function considerable thought and as I indicated to you earlier I feel the job of leading the CIA archives program should rest on the shoulders of a rather senior man -- and that he should be a professional archivist. The obvious source to whom we should turn for a well-qualified archivist is Dr. Rhoads, the Archivist of the United States. In the past, Dr. Rhoads has shown a distinct interest in nominating a senior archivist to CIA to help us formalize an Agency archives program. The deputy archivist should be appointed from present CIA staff and be qualified to provide organizational knowledge which will complement the senior archivist's specialized grasp of archival theory, practice, and procedures.

8. In this regard, I confess that the concept of having the directorate records officers function as directorate archivists does not attract me. Aside from watering down the effectiveness of their respective functions, I feel that there is too much spread between

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the nature of the two activities, the records function being more technical in nature. In my opinion the directorate archivists should be full-time archivists, appointed by the Deputy Directors, with the concurrence of the CIA Archivist and directly responsible to him, if we are to expect any real activity from them. In sum, and regardless of the skill and dedication of the people who fill the archivist positions, the effectiveness of the archives program (as well as the records and history programs) in CIA will be commensurate with the attention devoted to it by the command line.

9. In conclusion, implementation of the following suggestions should contribute to an effective archives program:

a. Upgrade the membership of the Records Management Board and have it report to the Executive Director-Comptroller.

b. Recruit a well-qualified senior archivist to initiate a formal agency archives program.

c. Appoint a full-time Directorate archivist from each Directorate.

d. Include the Agency archivist and historian as members of the Records Management Board.

e. Have a member of the Board attend Information Processing Board meetings as a non-voting member.

(signed) John W. Coffey

John W. Coffey
Deputy Director
for Support

DDS/SSS/LRF:rf (30 Mar 72)

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